



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

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Firefighters Dispatched to North Carolina

Jackson, Miss.—Today, the Mississippi Forestry Commission dispatched an eleven-member firefighting Strike Team to eastern North Carolina to help with wildfire suppression efforts.

“This team has been assigned to the Evans Road Fire burning on the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge,” said Charlie Morgan, State Forester of the Mississippi Forestry Commission. “This fire started on June 1 by a lightning strike and has now burned over 41,000 acres.”

According to fire officials, the Evans Road Fire is 75 percent contained. Although the fire is burning in a wetland area consisting of peat bogs, extended drought conditions caused the area to dry out. More fire information is available from the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources (www.dfr.state.nc.us) and the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (www.fws.gov/pocosinlakes).

This strike team consists of five Type-Six Fire Engines with operators and one strike team leader. A Type-Six Engine is a one-ton truck equipped with a 150-gallon water tank and pumping system. This type of firefighting equipment is lightweight and designed for rapid response to grass and brush fires and is also used in mop up operations once a fire is contained.

Serving on the strike team are team leader Michael Montgomery (Lincoln County), James Parker (Clarke Co.), Adam Vaughn (Newton Co.), Billy Keith Tadlock (Smith Co.), Paul Thorton (Smith Co.), Paul Greenough (Jackson Co.), Jesse Goff (Jackson Co.), Morice Steber (Hancock Co.), Heath Waltman (Hancock Co.), Joshua Myers (Harrison Co.), and Patrick Williams (Harrison Co.).

According to Morgan, the wildfire danger in Mississippi is currently low due to routine and scattered rains over the past few weeks, thereby allowing the Forestry Commission to dispatch firefighters and equipment out of state. Last week, the Forestry Commission dispatched a similar strike team to Texas.

The Mississippi Forestry Commission and other states’ forestry agencies honor an agreement to provide assistance to each other during times of critical need, such as the case in Texas and North Carolina with the extreme wildfire activity. As part of the agreement, the Forestry Commission will be reimbursed for expenses, such as fuel and personnel time, by the state calling for assistance.

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